

Message Text

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42

ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3770

INFO CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 6154

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, RP

SUBJECT: NEW EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS CREATED

REF: MANILA 4927

1. ON MAY 16 PRESIDENT MARCOS CREATED NEW DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HIGHWAYS AND APPOINTED BALTAZAR AQUINO AS SECRETARY. AN ILOCANO, ACUINO, 63, IS OLD ASSOCIATE OF PRESIDENT WHO HAS SERVED AS COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC HIGHWAYS SINCE MARCH 1966. AS COMMISSIONER, AQUINO HAS PRESIDED OVER ONE OF TRADITIONALLY MOST GRAFT-RIDDEN BUREAUS IN PHIL GOVERNMENT AND HAS OPERATED INDEPENDENTLY OF HIS NOMINAL CHIEF, PUBLIC WORKS SECRETARY DAVID CONSUNJI. AQUINO'S WIFE IS EXTREMELY CLOSE TO MRS. MARCOS, WHO IS INDEBTED TO HER FOR DEFLECTING ASSASSIN'S ATTACK IN LATE 1972. AQUINO, DESCRIBED BY A RESPECTED LOCAL BUSINESSMAN AS A "SCOUNDREL", HAS APPARENTLY BEEN ELEVATED TO CABINET RANK AS RESULT OF HIS LONG LOYALTY TO PRESIDENT AND UNDOUBTEDLY DUE TO LOBBYING OF MRS. MARCOS.

2. LONG RUMORED SPLIT OF DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES (DANR) FINALLY OCCURRED MAY 17
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WHEN PRESIDENT MARCOS SIGNED DECREE 461. AT SAME TIME

MARCOS APPOINTED JOSE LEIDO, JR., 39, AS NEW SECRETARY FOR NATURAL RESOURCES. A FORMER ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE SECRETARY FOR DEVELOPMENT AFFAIRS (1965-1967) AND NACIONALISTA PARTY CONGRESSMAN FROM ORIENTAL MINDORO (1967-1972), LEIDO IS CONSIDERED MORE A POLITICAL APPOINTEE THAN A TECHNOCRAT. A WELL-PLACED SOURCE HAS INDICATED THAT LEIDO WILL INSURE THAT LOGGING AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCE INTERESTS OF ASSOCIATES OF PRESIDENT MARCOS ARE PROTECTED. HOWEVER, LEIDO HAS EXCELLENT ACA DQCDBACKGROUND (COLUMBIA, OXFORD, LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND GOETHE INSTITUTE) AND ENJOYS REPUTATION AS HARD-WORKING AND SKILLED ADMINISTRATOR.

3. COMMENT: THESE TWO NEW DEPARTMENTS BRING TO TOTAL OF SIX THE NUMBER OF DEPARTMENTS CREATED SINCE BEGINNING MARTIAL LAW. MANILA CONTINUES TO ABOUND WITH RUMORS OF CREATION OF A DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT AND POSSIBLE CHANGES IN SECRETARIES OF AGRICULTURE AND PUBLIC WORKS. FURTHER DETAILS WILL BE SENT BY AIRGRAM. SULLIVAN

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NNN

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